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TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU PREL KPAO
SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
FRIDAY, JULY 31, 2009

In Today's Papers

Turkey Wants to Mediate at Hamas-Fatah Talks
Mainstreams Milliyet and Sabah, citing Al-Jazeera TV, report that Turkey has asked Egypt to relinquish its mediation role in the reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah. Ankara made the formal request to Egypt's intelligence chief Omar Suleiman. Reportedly, the Turkish government also sent a message indicating Turkey was ready to mediate Palestinian dialogue to Palestinian President Abbas. Reconciliatory talks between Hamas and Fatah were planned for August 25. But, due to the increased tensions between Hamas and Fatah recently, it remains unclear whether the talks will take place or not. Milliyet adds that Palestinian daily Al Kuds recently said that the Palestinian Administration requested Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu intervene directly and convince Hamas to come to the table for dialogue.

MHP Opposes The AKP Government's Kurdish Initiative
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Vatan, Tercuman: Opposition party MHP leader Devlet Bahceli yesterday strongly criticized the the government's democratic initiative to resolve the Kurdish problem. He said "The agenda of ethnic separatism targeting Turkey's national existence, is step by step being pursued by the AKP government. The Prime Minister, who shows no will to fight terrorism, is preparing to surrender to terror by acting as a subcontractor of separatist demands. The project of separatism and division, introduced as a democratic opening package, is a new phase of this submissive policy. The government's announcement shows that the PKK's demands will gradually be met in the short, medium and long terms."

Editorial Opinion on Government's Kurdish Initiative

Oktay Eksi wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The only way to achieve a success is to advance individual democratic rights for the entire nation. If this initiative limits itself to a specific ethnic group then it is doomed to fail in the end."

Mehmet Barlas wrote in mainstream Sabah: "There is a positive climate regarding the search for a solution to the Kurdish issue, however the benchmark for success is harmony between the expectations of the military and the government. Otherwise this

effort, like those in the past, will only be in vain."

Fikret Bila wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "When questions arise about the military's view regarding the recent government initiative, military sources refer to the Chief of General Staff Basbug's April 14 speech at the War Academy. In that speech, General Basbug emphasized the need for the enhancement of the nation-state structure and the advancement of individual freedoms. He referred to 'Turkish citizenship' as a primary identity for Turkey's citizens and said that different individual cultural identities reflect Turkey's richness, but ethnic identities should be secondary to that so there are no efforts to create new minorities."

Akin Ozcer wrote in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak: "The best remedy to the Kurdish problem is to work toward more democracy and freedoms as well as a new constitution. That is what Turkey is in need of urgently."

Murat Yetkin wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "There is an ongoing mistrust between the army and the government due to two major controversies disagreement over the government's attitude toward an alleged coup document and disagreements regarding the trial of military personnel in civilian courts. The very last meeting between General Basbug and PM Erdogan was held to discuss these topics. Tomorrow Basbug and Erdogan will be present at the Higher Military Council session, which may prove to be interesting in terms of predicting their future relationship."

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Urbancic Warns Cypriots against 'Provocations' (Cumhuriyet) Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports the U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus, Frank Urbancic, warned the Greek and the Turkish sides on the island to refrain from provocative actions which might disrupt the negotiations process regarding oil exploration activities in the Mediterranean. Urbancic told the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington that no matter what agreement the leaders of both sides strike, the U.S. would support it. Urbancic also said Turkey was in close cooperation with the Turks in the island, but added the Turkish Cypriots do not feel as if they themselves are Turks. Mainstream Hurriyet reports Urbancic made a mistake by saying Turkey has "borders with Russia."

A Massacre at a Mosque Against The "Nigerian Taliban" Media note the brutality with which Nigerian government forces suppressed an Islamist movement that allegedly had ties to the Taliban and advocated the use of Sharia law. In "Massacre at a Mosque," Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "The Boko Haram group, which is tied to the Taliban, was attacked in a mosque in Nigeria by military forces," and, "The Taliban's Number Two, Ebubekir Shekau, was found dead among the 200 who were killed." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headlines, "Bloody Force Used Against a Mosque in Nigeria." Leftist Taraf reports, "Nigeria Closes in on the Taliban." Liberal Radikal reports, "Boko Haram had begun a Sharia revolution," which was "put down with force," as "the group's leader died in military custody."

Iranian Reformists Mark the 40th Day After Neda's Death With Protest (Radikal)

Media pay close attention to clashes that broke out between police and demonstrators in Iran yesterday after thousands turned out to mark the 40th day after a young woman was killed by security forces.

Mainstream Haberturk headlines, "The Police Block the Reformists' Memorial to Neda," who was a bystander killed by security forces during the crackdown following the disputed June 12th elections. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "Iranian Police used gas bombs against demonstrators," who were "mourning the death of Neda." Leftist Taraf headlines, "The Opposition Mourns Its Martyrs in Iran." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "Thousands clashed with police as they paid their respects to the opposition's symbol, Neda." Mainstream Sabah headlines, "A Beating for the Gathering To Remember Neda."

An Election Under a Burka (Sabah)

Media note the tense atmosphere in Afghanistan prior to elections on August 20th. Mainstream Sabah notes the Taliban issued a statement "calling for jihad against U.S. bases in Afghanistan." Sabah says the Taliban also threatened people by saying "Those who vote will be declared enemies and collaborators. Sabah adds that female candidates are "suffering" due to the high number of death threats against them. In addition, female candidates' posters are being removed from the stands and the ones who are not wearing a burka are being beaten.

Russia and Cuba Cooperate in Oil Exploration in Gulf of Mexico
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet cites Cuban papers reporting that Russia and Cuba will begin oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. Cumhuriyet calls the move "an effort to enhance cooperation, which has diminished following the collapse of the Soviet Union." Havana estimates there are 20 billion barrels of oil reserves in its region while the U.S. puts the figure at 5 billion barrels, says Cumhuriyet.

Obama: We Are Seeing an End to Recession (Cumhuriyet)
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports President Obama, in an address in North Carolina where unemployment rate stands at 11 percent, said the beginning of the end to recession might be in sight. Obama said markets were rising, and the financial system was not at the brink of collapse. The President also defended the bailout of car producers such as Chrysler and General Motors, and stressed that a collapse of these companies would be crushing for

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the economy.

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- The Association of Automotive Distributors says Turkey charges the second highest taxes in Europe after Denmark.
- Independent MP Kamer Genc is the first candidate for the post of parliament speaker to be elected August 4.
- On August 1, a "Kurdish workshop" will be held at the Police Academy with the participation of Interior Minister Besir Atalay.
- Labor Minister Omer Dincer says the government was planning to make legal regulations to reduce bureaucratic red tape.

World

- FM Davutoglu met in Beirut with the PM-designate Saad Hariri and Education Minister Bahia Hariri.
- NATO spokesman James Appathurai says there were no nuclear weapons kept in NATO's arsenal; only some member countries did.
- The Zimbabwean government has lifted a ban on the BBC reporting freely from the former British colony, ending restrictions that were in place for eight years.
- French President Sarkozy returns to work after his collapse while jogging but says he had been hit by fatigue and must rest.

JEFFREY